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## Karzai: Captured Taliban leaders should be tried in Afghanistan

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Afghan President Hamid Karzai said the fate of Taliban leaders recently captured by Pakistani security forces should be decided in Afghanistan, a news report said Saturday.

In an interview with Pakistan's English-language daily The News, Karzai said his government would soon send a formal request to Islamabad to extradite Taliban's deputy chief Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar and other insurgents.

The interview was published a day after a Pakistani court blocked the possible deportation of Baradar, and four other leaders including two 'shadow governors' for the Afghan provinces of Kunduz and Baghlan, captured by intelligence agents earlier this month.

Mullah Baradar and other Taliban leaders are Afghans and their future is linked with Afghanistan, therefore their future should be decided in Afghanistan, Karzai told the newspaper.

The president refused to reply to a question whether Baradar would be prosecuted or used for reconciliation with Taliban.

Baradar's arrest remains shrouded in secrecy since it was revealed early this week, and questions have swirled about the implications of the capture.

Some analysts say that Pakistan arrested Baradar because he had established indirect links with the Afghan government for possible talks, without the knowledge and approval of Pakistani intelligence agencies that have covertly supported the militants over the years.

For Pakistan, direct contacts between Taliban and the Afghan government would mean loss of influence over militants which it has used as proxies to protect its strategic interests in Afghanistan.